

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 SS-15 SP-02 FTC-01
JUSE-00 SEC-01 AGR-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /045 W
-----032567 061643Z /11
P 061519Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7848

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 10614

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: EGEN, EINV, ECOSOC, UN
SUBJECT: AGREEMENT ON ILLICIT PAYMENTS

REF: (A) STATE 168816, (B) STATE 168316,
(C) STATE 168317

1. ECON COUNSELOR ON JULY 5 DISCUSSED ILLICIT PAYMENTS
ISSUE WITH ROBIN GRAY, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPT. OF TRADE.
GRAY HAD JUST RECEIVED BRITISH REPORTS ON THE NEW YORK
WORKING GROUP MEETING - REPORTS WHICH EVIDENTLY CORRES-
PONDED CLOSELY IN FACT AND ASSESSMENT TO OURS. GRAY
WAS IMPRESSED BY THE CHANGES ON SUBSTANCE IN A DIRECTION
FAVORED BY U.K. HE WAS EVEN MORE IMPRESSED WITH THE
DANGERS OF U.K. ISOLATION ON AN ISSUE HE VIEWS AS OF
LESS THAN PRIMARY IMPORTANCE, WHERE U.K. ISOLATION
WOULD EXPOSE THE GOVERNMENT TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL
CRITICISM.

2. GRAY WOUND UP HIS MUSINGS ON THE SUBJECT BY PRE-
DICTING, SUBJECT TO THE CAVEATS THAT HE WAS NOT YET
DEEPLY INTO THE SUBJECT AND THAT A DECISION WOULD BE
TAKEN AT A HIGH INTERDEPARTMENTAL LEVEL, THAT THE U.K.
WOULD NOT OPPOSE A DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE, BUT THAT 1980
WAS THE EARLIEST DATE IT WOULD AGREE TO FOR THE CON-
VENING OF THE CONFERENCE. (GRAY NOTED THAT HE PER-
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SONALLY RPT PERSONALLY THOUGHT 1979 SHOULD BE POSSIBLE,
BUT THERE IS OPPOSITION TO SUCH A RELATIVELY EARLY DATE
ON TWO GROUNDS: (A) THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE
DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE COULD NOT BE COMPLETED SO QUICKLY;
(B) SOME U.K. OFFICIALS HOPE THAT MORE TIME FOR
"PREPARATION" WOULD IN FACT PERMIT MORE DISCUSSION
LEADING EITHER TO FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE MODIFICATION IN

U.K. DIRECTION OR TO REVELATION OF INSUPERABLE OBSTACLES,
E.G. INTOLERABLE DEMANDS RE SOUTH AFRICA.)

3. GRAY'S RESPONSE WAS ONE OF THE MOST ENCOURAGING
WE'VE HAD ON THIS ISSUE, AND LEADS US TO HOPE THAT THE
BRITISH WILL DECIDE PRIOR TO JULY 17 TO ADOPT A POSITION
CLOSE TO WHAT USG DESIRES. WE THINK IT BEST FOR THE
MOMENT TO LEAVE THE ACTION WITH GRAY AND THE DEPT. OF
TRADE. HOWEVER, IF BRITISH HAVE NOT REACHED POSITIVE,
RELATIVELY ACCEPTABLE DECISION BY EARLY NEXT WEEK,
AMBASSADOR WILL SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CORRUPTION, AGREEMENTS, BRIBERY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON10614
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780277-0711
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780791/aaaacysh.tel
Line Count: 75
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a471827a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION L
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 168816, 78 STATE 168316, 78 STATE 168317
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2105671
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AGREEMENT ON ILLICIT PAYMENTS
TAGS: EGEN, EINV, ECOSOC, UN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a471827a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014